Report of the Accreditation Visiting Team

Canyon View Junior High School 625 East 950 North Orem, Utah 84097

April 5-6, 2005



Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Canyon View Junior High School

625 East 950 North Orem, Utah 84097

April 5-6, 2005

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 5-6, 2005, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Canyon View Junior High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Amelia Schwartz is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Canyon View Junior High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Canyon View Junior High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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CANYON VIEW JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Glen Bailey	Assistant Principal
Dr. Sharon Kay Smith	
Joel Miller	

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Pat Garcia	Counselor
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Susan Tucker
Rebecca Wilhelm

CANYON VIEW JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

We dedicate ourselves to effective student learning and continuous improvement

BELIEF STATEMENTS

To promote student learning and continuous improvement, each member of our community pledges and believes in:

- Valuing one another
- Engaging in relevant learning experiences for self and others
- Expecting, assessing, and supporting student learning
- Supporting collaborative problem solving
- Encouraging family and public support

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Dr. Christine Huley, Granite School District, Visiting Team Chairperson
Linda James, Matheson Junior High School, Granite School District
Dan Barney, South Ogden Junior High School, Ogden School District
Kevin Chambers, Eisenhower Junior High School, Granite School District
Michael Goodman, Mount Jordan Middle School, Jordan School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

CANYON VIEW JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Canyon View Junior High School was built in 1985 with a capacity for two thousand students. Grade levels include 7th, 8th, and 9th grades. The current enrollment is 1,170 students, in addition to 50 certified staff members and 30-plus support staff members. Canyon View has a growing ethnic population that mirrors Orem City's growth and development. The school serves the largest population of ELL and special education students in Alpine School District. Some of Alpine's finest employees serve this school community. In addition, the school enjoys outstanding parental support. Canyon View embraced the philosophy of becoming a Professional Learning Community three years ago in order to shape a traditional school culture into a collaborative learning community.

Canyon View Junior High School is supported by a unique mix of community resources and businesses. The top employers that support the Utah Valley area include BYU, Alpine School District, Utah Valley State College, IHC Health Services, and the Nebo School District. Enrollment at Canyon View has remained fairly constant. Although the school is capable of housing two thousand students, its enrollment since 1999 has fluctuated from 1,192 students to 1,226 students, and then down to 1,184 students in 2005. Gender ratio has also remained constant, with approximately 600 males and 600 females since 1999. Minority students include Asian, Black, Hispanic, Indian and Pacific Islanders. The largest ethnic group is the Hispanic population. The percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunches has increased significantly, from 16 percent in 2000 to 38 percent in 2005. This could be attributed to the increase in minority populations and economic challenges. (Interestingly, fee waivers have only increased by five percent in the past five years.) The number of special education students has also grown, from 115 to 144.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

Information about student attendance is positive, with an average of 97 percent student attendance for the past three years. Student citizenship data is also positive, with small numbers of the student body earning unsatisfactory grades. For example, only 57 students received an unsatisfactory citizenship grade during the second quarter.

From the NSSE opinion surveys, the following areas emerged as needing to be addressed: communication between home and school, strengthening the Homeroom program, and relevant learning strategies for the students. These areas are currently being addressed.

Achievement data from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and SAT 9 (Language Arts and Social Science) indicate that Canyon View students perform in the 60th percentile. On the Utah State Core Assessments, female students outperformed male students by 10 to 15 percentage points. It is clear that the learning needs of ELL and special education students are focal areas to be addressed. Co-teaching classes have been established to affect student learning within these populations. Integrated science scores for 7th graders have decreased considerably, but this was attributed to the change in science core standards; realignment with the new core is required.

The Direct Writing Assessment, taken by all 9th graders, has resulted in an increase in writing skills and scores. Emphasis on the Six Traits of Writing has been a significant factor in the increase of these writing scores. Scholastic Reading Inventory Scores indicated that 7th and 8th grade students were below grade level in reading; as a result a Read 180 class was designed to meet their learning needs.

A grade distribution analysis indicated the number of students receiving A's is higher at the beginning of the year and declines as the year progresses. These are trends that the faculty will be paying attention to.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

The school profile provides an overall picture of who is learning and who is not. The school community should continue its quest to further disaggregate the data so that it becomes even clearer who is and not learning, and which specific skills and concepts need to be addressed.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Continue to further disaggregate data to get clearer on the learning needs of Canyon View students.
- Monitor the progress of the ELL and special education populations.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

a) To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?

The school community was clearly engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students. Teachers, parents, administrators, students, and community members were involved in the consensus-building process. The brainstorming of all stakeholders led to proposals, which were revised and revisited. The Faculty

Council, Department Chairs, and School Community Council voted upon and approved the final draft of the self-study. In developing the mission, beliefs, and DRSLs, the faculty and leadership teams carefully examined the school's demographic population, culture, and academic deficiencies. All stakeholders examined the latest research and trends in education, including ideas expressed in books such as *Results*, *Whatever it Takes*, and *Professional Learning Communities*. Results of stakeholder surveys and profile data were presented to the school community regularly as the self-study was developed.

b) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations

The self-study carefully investigated the multi-faceted component of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The studied areas include, but are not limited to, demographic data, testing data, grade distributions, students achieving AYP, student attendance, citizenship, and the vast array of student support programs. Student support reflects the needs of the students. Examples include an after-school tutoring program and the Read 180 program, which address the literacy needs of students. Members of the school community were very forthcoming about their ongoing need to monitor the increase of the Hispanic and special education populations. In assessing the curricular needs of the school, the leadership team believed that core standards needed to be reviewed and benchmarks designed to ensure that all students are mastering the necessary skills. The opinion surveys demonstrated which areas are perceived as needing to be addressed. Again, the school leadership took responsibility for areas of need and has begun to address these. Areas of focus include home and school communication, the assessment of a Homeroom program, and relevant learning experiences for students.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

School's desired results for student learning are as follows:

1. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

Students communicate clearly using appropriate methods. Students communicate with purpose and understanding of audience. Students communicate effectively by implementing quality work standards.

2. RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN

Students are accountable for personal choices and act ethically. Students value their own and others' dignity, needs, rights, and property. Students act as responsible citizens in their community.

3. COMPUTER AND INFORMATION LITERATE

Students use appropriate technology to expand learning. Student can obtain reliable and relevant information to form reasonable conclusions.

Students organize, analyze, evaluate and apply information gathered.

4. COMPLEX THINKER

Students make connections between classroom and life experiences. Students use multiple thinking strategies to solve problems. Students reflect on and evaluate their learning for the purpose of improvement.

5. COLLABORATOR

Students work together to accomplish tasks in various situations. Students extend themselves to contribute to the common goal.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

a) To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?

The school has been involved in the implementation of professional learning communities, and as a result has developed a culture of collaboration during the past three years. School leadership has facilitated a process that has involved the parents, students, community, and school staff in the development of a mission, beliefs, and desired results for student learning that reflect the current and future needs of the students of Canyon View. Through large and small group discussion, a process that facilitated looking at profile, opinion, focus group, and departmental data occurred.

b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?

The belief statements about the learning for all students at Canyon View support the current and future student achievement needs of the students. They reflect the development of respect, relevant learning experiences, collaborative problem solving, and the need for parent and community support and assessment of high levels of student learning.

c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

The desired results for student learning are in direct alignment with the school's mission and beliefs. For example, the DRSLs for effective communicator, responsible citizen, complex thinker, and collaborator are embedded in both the mission and beliefs, which support high levels of effective learning for all students.

Curriculum Development:

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?

The evidence shows that all departments at Canyon View Junior High School are working collaboratively to align their curricula with the Utah State Core and Alpine School District Board of Education Goals.

Members of each department works together to establish yearly goals to ensure the effective implementation of the Utah State Core Curriculum. Those goals are revisited regularly to access progress. Many departments identify and align curriculum "big ideas" or standards within grade levels.

b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?

All departments worked together to clearly outline how their curriculum and instructional strategies are aligned with the school's desired results for student learning.

Teachers have time set aside monthly for collaboration and exchanging teaching strategies, lesson plans, and best practices.

Professional development days provide training in and modeling of research-based instructional practices. All teachers have had introductory training in reading strategies, the Six Traits of Writing, differentiated curriculum, and brain research.

Quality Instructional Design:

a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?

The Visiting Team observed many actively engaged students participating in relevant learning experiences. Some examples of activities observed include hands-on activities, group work, labs, use of manipulatives, student presentations, warm-up activities, student journals, and problem-solving activities.

It was evident in many classrooms that the students enjoy the type of learning that takes place at Canyon View Junior High. Students commented in interviews that they enjoyed the school because their teachers do a lot of "fun" activities.

The Visiting Team commends the faculty members for collaborating with one another and sharing different ideas of effective instructional practices. It is evident that Canyon View Junior High is a very open and inviting school where ideas and recommendations are freely shared. Most teachers are actively engaged in providing quality instruction for all students. The Visiting Team would recommend that all teachers continue to gain, share, and practice high quality teaching methods that will ultimately lead to better student achievement.

b) To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?

The professional staff at Canyon View is aware that the population of students at the school is changing. For example, the Hispanic population is on the rise. Teachers are aware that their teaching strategies cannot remain static. Various strategies were observed by the Visiting Team. For example, students were involved in differentiated learning strategies that included art in math and science classes and hands-on activities in many other classes; teachers were using pictures and symbols to explain concepts instead of just speaking about them. Students were involved in classroom activities that were more than just "textbook" learning. The Visiting Team commends Canyon View Junior High on its efforts to continually strive to meet the needs of all learners.

With the rise in the number of ELLs and special education students, it has been noted that more training in the areas of ESL and differentiated learning will be needed. The Visiting Team recommends that the staff at Canyon View Junior High pursue this plan and continue to share ideas on differentiated learning.

c) To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?

The Visiting Team strongly commends the efforts the professional staff has made to provide additional opportunities that support student learning. The Visiting Team was impressed with the many activities that are in place to support student achievement, behavior, and interests.

The Visiting Team observed that there are many support systems to help students academically. Teachers are available for one-on-one help before or after school; the

after school Learning Resource Center (LRC) and the expanding use of technology are other examples. It was also observed that Canyon View has wonderful PTO and parent support. Interviewed parents commended the faculty for posting grades on the Internet and allowing parents to feel welcome at the school, all of which supports student learning at Canyon View Junior High School.

The Visiting Team recommends that the professional staff at Canyon View Junior High continue to support student learning through the many activities that are already in place.

Quality Assessment Systems:

a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?

Clearly articulated expectations have been identified school-wide with the DRSLs.

The school faculty members have been working collaboratively, by department or individual subject area, to set performance expectations for each grade level.

Canyon View Junior High assessments are based on classroom instruction and the Core Curriculum; they are graded fairly, are age-appropriate, and reflect the intended or desired student outcomes in each department.

b) To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?

The staff has developed an understanding of and appreciation for the importance of using multiple assessments in evaluating student performance.

Departments have clearly articulated the types of assessments used in their departments to reflect the intended purpose of the assessment and performance standards.

As part of its action plan, Canyon View Junior High School faculty will be trained in interpretation of data to facilitate curriculum decisions.

c) To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?

It is evident to the Visiting Team that the staff at Canyon View Junior High is dedicated to fair and equitable assessment of student performance. Staff members have outlined action steps to continue development of assessment tools. As the staff continues to utilize multiple assessments and further refine the process, equity and fairness are further guaranteed.

Leadership for School Improvement:

a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?

The school has established a strong and positive academic learning climate in which teaching and learning are actively supported. The staff continues to learn, read, and apply relevant, quality research-based materials. The school has made a commitment to reading, learning, and applying the concept of Professional Learning Communities. The staff has used the accreditation process has a means to identify strengths and challenges. As a result, a variety of programs have been designed and implemented to address the learning needs of students. These include Read 180, Six Traits of Writing, and Quality Work Standards. The school climate has been positively influenced by supportive programs such as Fantastic Falcon, Making the Grade, and Student of the Week.

b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?

The Canyon View staff is committed to using data and research to make appropriate decisions that align with the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. One example of data used is CRT scores, to evaluate performance and instructional practices. By analyzing the number of tardies, the leadership team designed a program that emphasized a starter activity in every class and early intervention with parents. As a result, more students are in class when instruction begins, and student achievement has increased. The results of stakeholder opinion surveys are used to readjust or design appropriate programs.

c) To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?

Student achievement is monitored through careful analysis of yearly test data, the CRT and the NAEP. Through all content areas the focus is on increased literacy skills, which are facilitated through school-wide quality work standards. Individual departments implement their own monitoring strategies to ensure that students are not missing assignments and are mastering the concepts. It is a goal of the school to develop benchmark assessments for all content areas. The SEOP process supports the life skills and future development of students to further their education and begin career exploration.

d) To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?

The School leadership uses the mission, beliefs, and DRSLs to navigate the instructional decisions of the school community. The allocation of resources is determined by using these guidelines. The needs of the students set the tone for allocation of resources and development of programs. A safe and positive learning environment is reinforced through the use of trackers, student planners, and a four-step discipline plan. In addition, safe school policies provide limited access to outsiders, as well as intervention programs for issues of bullying, harassment, gangs, drugs, and alcohol.

e) To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?

The school leadership consistently uses the mission, beliefs, DRSLs, and data to inform the school community of the learning needs of students. Through grade level teams, department meetings, whole faculty collaboration, and professional learning communities, decisions are made by educators, the PTO, and the Community Council. Student voices are heard through input sessions and the student council. Stakeholders at Canyon View are empowered to be involved in decisions that affect student learning.

f) To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?

The school leadership welcomes and expects the school stakeholders to be an integral part of the Canyon View community. Parents and the community are involved with the school in a variety of ways. Examples include involvement in the School Community Council, PTO activities, and the focus group meetings. At homeroom input meetings, the WINGS program, and student council meetings, students may voice their needs, both academic and social.

Community Building:

a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

The Visiting Team observed a positive and inclusive school climate with a wide variety of enrichment programs, service-oriented activities, and student recognition programs designed to reinforce academic performance and good citizenship. Students and parents expressed a positive attitude about their school; students are included in the school's decision-making process through homeroom and student council meetings, and parents through the school community council and PTO.

Teachers expressed a desire to continue and expand collaborative planning and implementation of departmental and grade-level activities. The ninth grade team has been especially productive in this area by establishing the Ninth Grade Center. The Ninth Grade Center teachers meet weekly to discuss individual student progress and needs, student discipline, and interdisciplinary units. The school has a supportive administration dedicated to the implementation of middle-level education best practices for affecting student learning.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

Canyon View Junior High has an active and involved Parent Teacher Organization and School Community Council, and has established school partnerships with twenty-two community businesses. These organizations actively support the financial needs of the many enrichment and student recognition programs. Students and parents have been actively involved in the accreditation process and school improvement plan.

The school uses PowerSchool to give parents and students online access to student assignments and grades, and strives to maintain meaningful contact with families served by the school. The school uses both traditional parent-teacher conferences and student-led conferences four times during the year. There is an 80 percent attendance rate for parent-teacher conferences.

Transition of sixth grade students into the seventh grade at Canyon View Junior High School is well articulated, and there is an effort to improve the transition of ninth grade students into the two high schools that serve the community. The language arts teachers have met several times with their counterparts in grades four through twelve to coordinate curricula and explore best practices and common problems affecting student learning.

<u>Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:</u>

a) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?

The faculty and administration have demonstrated a commitment to professional development. Forty-four percent of the staff members have advanced education degrees, and 73 percent of the staff members hold multiple endorsements. Twenty-two staff members have one to nine years of experience, twelve have ten to nineteen years, and eighteen have 20 to 38 years of experience. In-service and professional development opportunities are provided regularly through nine state-funded Professional Development days and seven school late-start days throughout the year. Teachers participate in conferences and workshops.

b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

The Visiting Team found evidence of change and modification of policies to address needs and perceptions discovered through stakeholder surveys. The advisory/homeroom program was examined and changed as a result of teacher and student input. Greater efforts to communicate with parents and community members were initiated after parent surveys and comments indicated a parental perception of lack of adequate school communication.

There is evidence of stakeholder ownership and commitment to the change process through investigating and adopting best practices in middle level education at Canyon View Junior High.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Most Utah public junior high/middle schools are not accredited through NAAS, but only by the USOE—it is their choice to join NAAS or not.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a) To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?

All of the steps of the Canyon View Junior High School action plan extensively identify areas of focus from the analysis of the self-study. The goals of the action plan address curriculum development, quality assessment systems, leadership for school improvement, and the educational agenda—each aligns with the identified desired results for student learning and the data that emerged from the self-study. Time lines, personnel, and resources that support the successful implementation of the goals are clearly stated and attainable with the six-year period of time.

b) To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?

The Visiting Team is confident that the self-study and the action steps evolved from an ongoing process of investigation, collaboration, and consensus among the teachers, administration, parents, and students. Judging from the discussions that

took place in the focus groups, School Community Council, and student council, the stakeholders are actively involved in the direction of the school in order to meet the needs of the students.

c) How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?

Through ongoing commitment to and development of professional learning communities, focus groups, departments, and grade level collaboration, there is strong historical evidence that the accomplishments of the school action plan will be monitored and assessed on a regular basis.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the Canyon View Junior High staff and community for their commitment to engage in an in-depth process of identifying learner needs; developing and aligning mission, beliefs, and DRSLs with student needs; and developing a viable action plan. This plan clearly supports the continuation of the work the school has already undertaken, particularly in the area of meeting the needs of diverse learners and the young adolescent.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff on developing a culture of collaboration and inquiry that focuses on student learning and is reinforced and supported by the administrators and teacher leadership. In addition, the Visiting Team commends the principal for her vision and leadership in the area of developing professional learning communities and building leadership capacity in her staff.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff for establishing and maintaining a positive, caring, and safe environment for students and teachers. Student achievement depends on a supportive school culture and climate, which directly correlate to a sense of well being in students and staff.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff for the development and implementation of academic support services and programs for students. These include, but are not limited to, Read 180, mathematics support, Quality Standards, Falcon Hour, Student Support Team, Learning Resource Center, and the Fine Arts Program.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff for listening to the voices of students and parents to ensure that the school community responds to the academic and social needs of the students, thus bringing about a positive learning environment.

• The Visiting Team commends the staff on the quality of instruction, caring, and enthusiasm they demonstrate to their students.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff continue to access meaningful data that is disaggregated, identifies students who are not learning, and pinpoints concepts and essential understandings in need of re-teaching.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff revisit the research from *Turning Points* and *This We Believe* (from the National Middle School Association) to review the characteristics and instructional/program needs of young adolescents and determine teaming needs for the 7th and 8th grade students.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff develop an evaluation process to ensure that instructional strategies that address the increasing population of diverse learners, such as differentiation, are being transferred to the classroom. Examples of accountability could include self-assessment, peer observations, and coaching.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff focus on alignment of curricula and design benchmarks to monitor student progress.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the counseling center conduct a needs assessment and schedule outreach support for students that focuses on the unique needs of each grade level.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff continue to develop professional learning communities and opportunities to collaborate around the learning needs of students.